

WHO IS THAT OLD MAN?

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,
that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 6:6

REVIEW

Some weeks back I attended a conference entitled, “In the World, But Not of It.” One presentation was “The World's Ally within the Believer” by Dr. Mark Minnick. I would like to introduce that concept with a current issue and then borrow some from his notes for the first portion of today's sermon.

First, the introduction. ISIS, the terrorist organization that is overrunning the mid-East and has released a video threatening a 9/11-style attack on the American homeland, is now reported to have established a camp in Mexico just eight miles from America's southern border. From this base ISIS is expected to attack military installations, railways, airports, and electrical power facilities as well as “soft targets” such as shopping malls, movie theaters, and public schools. Surely, one would think, such a scenario would compel swift and decisive action to protect our beloved country.

Is there a parallel to what we are studying in Romans 6? Yes. We have a more desperate situation than enemies eight miles from our border. Satan, the ultimate terrorist, who is most skilled in stealth operations, has a base of operations not near the border but *within* each believer. That base is called . . . the *flesh*. That is *the world's ally within the believer*.

I. First Question: What Is the Flesh?

A. Something akin to a nature. In some apparent sense . . .

1. It has lusts – Eph. 2:3 (“the lusts of our flesh”)
2. It has a will – Eph. 2:3 (“fulfilling the desires [willings] of the flesh”)
3. It has a mind – Rom. 8:7 (“the carnal mind [of those in the flesh] is enmity against God.”)
4. So, it is not merely a drift or tendency, but more a personality, or, again, a nature. The flesh is a little like a living, loathsome worm burrowed into a host body.

B. Indeed, the flesh is our *fallen* nature.

1. “Sin” and “flesh” are used interchangeably. See, for example, Rom. 7:17-18.
2. In it there is *no good* – Rom. 7:18.
3. It is not subject to the law of God – Rom. 8:7.
4. Nor *can* it be – Rom. 8:7. Compare with the “can not” in John 3:3.

C. There is a great freeing truth here, friends.

1. Are you tortured by doubts, etc.? Your enemy is not who you are in Christ now. It is this ally of the world, this ISIS within you, so to speak, that is fighting you every step of the way.

II. Second Question: What Is the Flesh's Activity within Us?

A. First know that it has been dethroned – Rom. 5:21.

1. It *hath* reigned. Past tense. It has been removed from the throne.

B. Yet it continues to oppose and contradict the desires of the Spirit – Gal. 5:17.

1. So, though dethroned, it is not yet destroyed.
2. It wages war against our souls – I Pet. 2:11 – “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

C. When we obey its desires, we re-enthroned it – Rom. 6:12-13, 16.

1. But this truth must be carefully clarified.
 - a. Believers can *never* be in the flesh rather than in the Spirit – Rom. 8:9
 - b. Nor can we *ever* be the old man rather than the new man – Rom. 6:6 (will explain)

III. Third Question: What Are We Taught for Combating the Flesh?

A. The fundamental necessity is KNOWLEDGE – Rom. 6:3, 6, 9.

1. Know the aspects of our union with Christ – death, burial, resurrection with Him.
2. Know that the body of sin has been *destroyed*.
3. Know that this death and new life are irreversible.

B. The first response to this knowledge must be FAITH – “Reckon” – :11

1. You see, :1-10 do not tell us to do something but that it's irreversibly *done*.

C. Then there must be YIELDING and NOT YIELDING – :12-14

1. Yield all to God.
2. Do not yield members to sin's attempts to re-reign.
 - a. Abstain from lusts – again, I Pet. 2:11.
 - b. Don't make any provision for them – Rom. 13:14.

In upcoming weeks we hope to speak more on this battle with the world's ally within us, but now we direct our focus to a matter which needs to be understood first. The question: **Who is the old man?**

Some people use “old man” interchangeably with “the flesh,” but that may not be good Bible exegesis. To refine our understanding on this subject, we turn to the teaching of Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

I. Definitions

A. “Old man” appears 3 times: here in Rom. 6:6, and also in Eph. 4:22 and Col. 3:9.

1. What is the old man? This is a troublesome question for many who repeatedly try to slay him.
2. But it doesn't mean the carnal nature or the flesh with its affections and lusts. If we identify the old man with those things, we will be confounded.
3. Really, the nature of the old man is obvious and plain, starting in Rom. 5:12. It's who a believer used to be in Adam. He is now a different man in Christ. It is what he was but is no longer, the one that was crucified. A Christian is no longer in Adam. That was his old humanity. The old humanity is not undergoing some process. It ... was ... crucified.
4. Think of a worm (old man) who has become a butterfly (new man). The old is gone forever.

B. “Body of sin” denotes the body that belonged to the power of sin, in which the members had been instruments of unrighteousness.

1. This aspect of the old man has been *destroyed*: made inert, void, inactive; brought to naught.
2. The verb tense is most significant. It is aorist, which means something that is complete, final, a one-time, forever-done action. Compare Heb. 10:10, 14.
3. We should all know this and live in the light of this knowledge.

II. Applications

A. Crucify or not crucify? – Gal. 5:24.

1. Note 2 important points: what is to be crucified and who is to do it.
 - a. What: the *flesh*. Never the old man. (Again, the old man was already killed once for all!)
 - b. Who: the *believer*. Compare Rom. 8:13. (But *God* crucified the old man!)

B. Put off or put on? – Eph. 4:22-24. See also Col. 3:9-10.

1. Analogy: at 60 a man is no longer a high school football player. Take off the pads already. It's over. You are never going back. You can't. Put on what is fitting to who you are now.
2. Likewise: Lady, you're no longer a teen. Put off the inappropriate attire, and put on what becomes the dignity and stature of who you are now.
3. You see, we are now a new race. We must put off the characteristics of the old. We are not to go on living as though that old man. We are to behave according to the new creation we are.

C. Understand and embrace objective truth.

1. Your old man has died once and for ever. This is a most comforting and reassuring truth!
2. We are never called to crucify our old man. Nowhere are we called to get rid of him, for he's already gone. What we are called to do is not continue living as if he were still there.

3. The only way to do that is to realize he isn't there. The trouble is when we don't realize who we are. It is when we do understand that we start to live victoriously. Believe. Receive.
4. This is not something we *experience* and *then* believe. Rather, it is only when we believe that we will begin to experience this victory.

D. Our model: Abraham – against hope he believed in hope – Rom. 4:18ff.

1. Abraham considered his and Sarah's bodies not to be dead; he staggered not but was convinced by God's Word, and so the couple was enabled to have children.
2. He did not start with the experience. He started with a statement from God.
3. You and I must do the same.
 - a. We wouldn't know we had been in Adam except by God's Word.
 - b. The same is true with our now being in Christ. This is the bare statement of God, and as Abraham we must simply believe.
 - c. Faith sees the promise and holds to it. As it does, *then* experiences and proofs are given.
 - d. "Take it on the bare Word of God. Let hell say no, let everything about us say no. Still plant your feet on this glorious promise. Take and believe by faith, that He has done what He said He has done. He has put us in Christ. It is because of this that nothing can ever take me out of Christ. This is guaranteed." – *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*
 - e. "The old man is the man I was in Adam, previous to coming to Christ. It is me B.C. (before Christ). Conversely, my new man is the man I am in Christ. It is the A.D. me after coming to Christ. My biography is written in two volumes. When I came to Christ, the B.C. volume was closed forever. The A.D. volume was opened. The new man that I am in Christ still possesses the same flesh that the old man I was in Adam possessed. The new man that I am in Christ is still capable of sinning in many of the same ways that the old man I was in Adam was capable of sinning. But the difference is as far apart as the east is from the west. Every sin I commit now is the sin of the new man. The old man can never sin again. He is gone! His volume is closed and clasped with an unbreakable lock by the omnipotent hand of God. Not another line can ever be written therein again. I am always, even at my most sinful, a new and justified man in Christ. I can never return to being the old, unjustified man in Adam. Hallelujah! – *Dr. Mark Minnick*

Do you want ISIS to take over our country? Do you have counsel for the the President? More significantly: Do you want the world's ally to take over you? Hear, then, the counsel in Romans 6.

DISCUSSION

1. Tell what you now understand about "the old man" and "the flesh." What are we to do with each? Be specific with the counsel you would share with others.